

There is no better way to cap off such an incredible season, in which the Lady Pirates went undefeated, than with their first ever state championship title.

La Vega's Calveion Landrum, named MVP of the game, scored her team 23 points for her team as they defeated Argyle.

The Lady Pirates' coach, Amy Gillum, was finally able to achieve the goal she started pursuing as a player at La Vega 19 years ago.

The championship was won as a result of both the players' and coach's hard work and dedication to their basketball program.

I congratulate Coach Gillum on the victory that would not have been possible without her guidance and the devotion from her players and fans.

Mr. Speaker, before I close I just want to say congratulations to an outstanding Texas District 17 high school girls' basketball team, coaching staff, fans, and community.

Go Lady Pirates.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF OMEGA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

#### HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 11, 2014*

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the 150th anniversary of Omega Christian Church in Arcadia, Indiana. It is a pleasure to congratulate the church in celebration of this special occasion.

Omega Christian Church was founded during some of our Nation's darkest days, in 1863 during the midst of the Civil War. At the time of the church's founding, the area was known as Bethany, but later became called Omega and is now Arcadia. Exemplifying the best of the hardworking and enterprising Hoosier spirit, the residents built the church themselves using local timber. Joseph Lacy oversaw the construction, and Dr. Silas Blount gave the dedication sermon in November of 1863. It was in this humble wooden structure that Knowles Shaw (1834–1878), an early minister of the church who was a prominent evangelist and composer of religious music, wrote the hymnal "Bringing in the Sheaves."

In the years following the war, the community around Omega Christian Church began to grow and prosper. After construction was finished on the church, a sawmill, general store, resident doctor, blacksmith, and post office were also established. In 1926, sixty-three years after the completion of the original structure, the church was moved and enlarged to make room for the growing congregation. The framework and sanctuary of the church are original and are still in use today, making the Omega Christian Church the oldest building in White River Township.

The church continued to grow and expand throughout the following years, including major structural improvements. While the physical building may have changed and evolved, Omega Christian Church's mission remains the same from its founding in 1863: to serve God, to serve his people, and to be a light in the community where stability, comfort, strength, and family can be found, all in the name of Jesus Christ. Today I am proud to recognize this small country church and thank

them for their contributions to the spiritual well-being of their community. May the next 150 years be equally blessed.

#### DON'T SINK THE SHIP—A TALE OF TWO WWII BUDDIES

#### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 11, 2014*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, throughout life, people come and go. Some stay for a lifetime. Some you might wonder how, out of the billions of people in the world, you end up next to them again after 90 years with everything from a war and life's triumphs in between. It's a rare occurrence, but the life story of two World War II veterans right here in Houston, Texas.

Hymie Abramson and Milton "Mittie" Tartakov celebrated birthdays together for years. They were both born on June 6th, 1924, at St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston. The coincidence of their birth date and place are only the beginning of their life story. Twelve years later, Mittie and Hymie found each other again on the San Jacinto High School baseball field. And that's where their true story began.

Mittie was a talented middle infielder and Hymie a utility outfielder. They stuck together through all the games, practices, and championships. Whatever event it was, they stuck by each other. Little did they know, that was only preparing them for what was to come. Shortly after graduating high school, Mittie and Hymie received their draft cards. Though it wasn't quite a surprise given the demand in WWII, going off to war is never easy to process. Questions and doubts, rightfully so, arose, and they had each other to help answer them. The first question became Army versus Navy, with many to follow. Mittie's older brother served in the Navy and Hymie's older brothers served in the Army. But they decided the U.S. Navy was for them. When Hymie questioned Mittie about how happy he was with his decision to join the Navy over the Army, he grinned and said, "We're still alive, aren't we?" That became their life motto.

During a conversation with Mittie, he smirked and said, "We were two green-faced kids fresh out of high-school, who thought we were going to San Diego for boot camp where there would be beaches, sun and girls. So we gathered what little money we had and, with the shirts on our back, planned for our travels. But the Navy had other plans, in fact, we were sent to Chicago, in the dead of winter, to train on Lake Michigan." The two battled the brutal winter on Lake Michigan while preparing for War, having never been further from Houston than Lubbock. This was the first of many realities they would face during their service.

After training together, both Hymie and Mittie were commissioned as Aviation Machinist Mates for the same ship the USS *Savo Island*—an escort carrier departing from the Kaiser Shipyard in Astoria, Oregon, heading for the South Pacific. During this time, both men learned a lot. The USS *Savo Island* was nicknamed a "jeep carrier" because of the relatively small size of the aircraft carrier. It held 40 planes, 15 bombers called TBM Avengers, and 25 fighter planes. The Avengers were tor-

pedo bombers targeting enemy surface ships. They had internal fuel tanks in the wings for additional fuel storage that would allow them to travel farther distances. Additionally, they had Yehudi lights which were used to match the brightness of the sky creating counter-illumination camouflage. The camouflage would allow them to get closer to the enemy without being seen until they were within the 3,000 yard range. Quite a different life from the baseball field where they first "officially" met.

The journey was unpredictable for both of the men who, at this point, were basically brothers. Every day was different. One day, about 6-months into deployment, Mittie and Hymie were playing football. Given their love for sports, it was their way of unwinding but maybe not on this day. During a casual game of football, Hymie went for a pass and fell off the flight deck, causing him to break his leg. No break is a good break but the outcome for him wasn't exactly what he had hoped for. There was no other option but for him to be taken to the hospital on Tulagi Island. The two men were separated at this moment for several years.

The days weren't easy. Nights were warm and days registered around 120 degrees with the sun beaming down on the men. On those kinds of nights, Mittie would seek refuge from what felt like an inferno by sleeping on the flight deck instead of down below in the bunks. Most of the nights anyway, men would rarely sleep through the night as they always had to be on-guard: submarine attacks and bombers were a frequent occurrence. There was a critical shortage of tail-gunners during this time. The tail-gunner position was the most dangerous on the bombers. Enemy aircraft targeted this position often, as it was the most vulnerable on the plane. But Mittie volunteered for the position as a tail gunner. Courtesy of the TBM's camouflage, it was the most forward plane of the squadron, closest to the enemy and furthest from the ship. While Mittie was working as a tail-gunner down range, Hymie regained his health and was sent stateside to continue work as an aviation machinist for the remainder of the War.

The USS *Savo Island* made a remarkable journey, fighting in seven invasions. The last combat mission they fought was in Okinawa, where the ship's radar tower was hit by a kamikaze. From there, the ship sailed to Guam, and there it was repaired before traveling to Alaska for refuge. It was off the shores of Alaska when Mittie was finally told the great news: Victory over Japan. The USS *Savo Island* continued its voyage for port at Pearl Harbor. While in Hawaii, the Navy treated the men to a 6-month R and R before heading back home. But as far as Mittie was concerned, Houston, Texas, sounded more like paradise than Hawaii. Before he finally returned home, the USS *Savo Island* earned the Presidential Unit Citation—the highest honor a ship can earn. That marked the day Mittie was permitted to wear the ribbon with "the star" on his uniform.

In 1946, Mittie and Hymie were both discharged at Camp Wallace in Galveston, Texas. Shortly after being discharged, the two veterans joined A-Jayes, a young mens social club. Mittie went on to attend college at the University of Houston. Upon graduation, he began working for a lumber yard, of which he eventually took ownership. He renamed it Milton's Lumber and Building Co. It was a success for 53 years.

Hymie owned Metropolitan Furniture with his brothers, where he worked on developing advertisements, design and even helped with the construction of the building. Despite everything Hymie and Mittie had in common throughout life, they chose different career paths. But that didn't come between them in any way. Both businesses were down the street from each other on Jensen Drive, and the best friends managed to eat lunch together almost every day.

The year 1953 would change both Hymie and Mittie's lives. It was the year they both met their wives, Blanch and Sally. These two women not only brought the two men closer but the two couples became best of friends. They did everything together from bowling leagues every week to traveling the country.

Five years ago, Hymie and his wife, Blanch, moved to the Hampton Post Oak. Sure enough, 2 years later, Blanch convinced Mittie to move there as well. Up until yesterday, Mittie and Hymie spent their days playing Texas Hold'em with their friends at The Hampton on Post Oak.

On March 10, 2014, Mittie went to be with the Lord. We are forever indebted to men like Mittie and Hymie for their service to America. They are the rare, special breed that has shaped our country into the great Nation we are today. They are the Greatest Generation. And that's just the way it is.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF CHARLES D. MCCRARY AS PRESIDENT AND CEO OF ALABAMA POWER

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 11, 2014*

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, with my Alabama delegation colleagues ROBERT ADERHOLT, SPENCER BACHUS, MO BROOKS, BRADLEY BYRNE, MARTHA ROBY, and TERRI SEWELL, I ask for the House's attention today to recognize Charles D. McCrary. Mr. McCrary is retiring March 2014 from Alabama Power as the president and Chief Executive Officer.

Mr. McCrary has served since October 25, 2001, as the 10th president and CEO of Alabama Power, which provides electricity to 1.4 million customers in Alabama. He joined Alabama Power during the summer of 1970 following his freshman year at Auburn University and has held various positions of increasing responsibility within Southern Company, including vice president for Southern Nuclear Operating Company, and later held the positions of president of Southern Company Generation, chief production officer of Southern Company and president of Southern Power Company.

Mr. McCrary was born in Birmingham in 1951. He graduated from Shades Valley High School and earned his Bachelor of Science in mechanical engineering from Auburn University, followed by a Juris Doctor from Birmingham School of Law and was admitted to the Alabama State Bar in 1979.

Mr. McCrary is married to the former Phyllis Brantley of Birmingham and the father of two sons, Doug and Alex.

Mr. McCrary has been an active leader in the community and state of Alabama while

serving as chairman of the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama and on the boards of Regions Financial Corporation, Mercedes-Benz U.S. International Inc., Protective Life Corporation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Southern Research Institute and the Auburn University Board of Trustees.

Mr. McCrary has been a coalition builder and a leader in economic development for the region and state through his vision and commitment calling for greater cooperation between cities, counties and business leaders. He was instrumental in bringing several large industries, to Alabama, including automotive, aerospace and steel manufacturers.

He implemented Target Zero, a safety program to ensure employees are properly trained and equipped to do their jobs safely, and the program has become a model for the utility industry. Mr. McCrary led the company and its customers through some of its greatest natural-disaster challenges, including Hurricane Ivan in 2004, which caused the largest number of outages in company history (825,701); Hurricane Katrina in 2005 with 636,891 outages; and the tornado disaster on April 27, 2011 with 412,000 outages. He made the decision to publicly announce restoration commitments after storms, a move that allowed the company to communicate to customers when they could expect to have power restored, making that practice standard today.

Mr. McCrary worked closely with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and managers to strengthen the relationship between the IBEW and management. He helped change the culture so management and labor have a mutual respect, creating a united front on behalf of all employees for various initiatives, including safety, employee morale and customer satisfaction and providing a business model throughout the industry.

Mr. Speaker, please join me and the entire Alabama Delegation in thanking Charles McCrary for his tireless dedication to Alabama Power. His service to our state is an inspiration. We wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. GENE GREEN**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 11, 2014*

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I was not able to be in Washington on March 4 through March 6, 2014 for votes because of the inclement weather and meetings in the district with the Secretary of Energy and EPA Administration.

If I had been here, I would have voted as follows:

On passage of the Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act, as amended, I would have voted "yes."

On passage of the resolution supporting the people of Venezuela as they protest peacefully for democratic change and calling to end the violence, I would have voted "yes."

On the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule for H.R. 3826, the Electricity Security and Affordability Act, and H.R. 4118, the SIMPLE Fairness Act, I would have voted "no."

On H. Res. 497, the resolution providing the rule for H.R. 3826 and H.R. 4118, I would have voted "no."

On the U.S.-Israel Strategic Partnership Act, as Amended, I would have voted "yes."

On the Motion to Recommit H.R. 4118, I would have voted "yes."

On passage of H.R. 4118, I would have voted "no."

On passage of the Energy Efficiency Improvement Act, I would have voted "yes."

On the Motion on Ordering the Previous Question on the Rule for H.R. 2824, the Preventing Government Waste and Protecting Coal Mining Jobs in America Act, and H.R. 2641, the RAPID Act, I would have voted "no."

On H. Res. 501, the resolution providing the rule for H.R. 2824 and H.R. 2641, I would have voted "no."

On the Smith of Texas and Schweikert Amendment, I would have voted "no."

On the Capps/McNerney Amendment, I would have voted "yes."

On the Schakowsky/Lowenthal Amendment, I would have voted "yes."

On the Waxman Amendment, I would have voted "yes."

On the Motion to Recommit H.R. 3826, I would have voted "yes."

On final passage of H.R. 3826, I would have voted "no."

On the Motion to Table H. Res. 504, I would have voted "no."

On the Jackson-Lee Amendment, I would have voted "yes."

On the McKinley Amendment, I would have voted "no."

On the Nadler Amendment, I would have voted "yes."

On the Johnson of Georgia Amendment, I would have voted "yes."

On the Motion to Recommit H.R. 2641, I would have voted "yes."

On final passage of H.R. 2641, I would have voted "no."

On passage to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine, I would have voted "yes."

BROWN'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN**

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, March 11, 2014*

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of Brown University's 250th birthday.

Since 1764, the crown jewel of Rhode Island's higher education has been turning out scholars, thinkers, researchers, and leaders. Few of the sixty original signatories to the Brown charter could have conceived of where the university would stand today. Brunonians today lead the world in particle physics, neurology, renewable energy, and many other disciplines that two and a half centuries ago seemed beyond human comprehension.

As a lifelong citizen of Rhode Island, I am especially proud that our values of intellectual freedom and religious tolerance are reflected in Brown University. The mission of the university remains as relevant as ever: "To serve the community, the nation and the world by discovering, communicating and preserving knowledge in a spirit of free inquiry, and by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation."